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I submit this communication to the Executive Matters and Legal Affairs Committee in support of Bill 69, which would amend the Honolulu Fire Code to require all high rise residential units be retrofitted with sprinkler systems.

I remind this distinguished panel that three human lives were horrifically taken on that dreadful day-a day which remains fresh in the minds of those who loved them. I remind this committee that a tragedy the likes of this recent one at Marco Polo simply can not occur again!

Opposition to the Bill primarily centers around financial considerations. A continuing retort that streams through the oppositions' chants is that the proposed change is characterized as a "KNEE JERK" reaction to a tragic event. One such testimony refers to this matter as a "hot button topic" and states that 'cooler heads need to prevail...' (Bruce Anderson-Misc. Com. 4018) This constant refrain minimizes the impact of this tragedy and implies that this Council's consideration is merely an emotional reaction, clothed in sympathy and grief. I consider sentiments of this nature offensive and rude, the subtle assertion that this honorable body, sworn to function in the best interests of its citizens would act absent a regard for sound judgment grounded in facts and need.

To the contrary, this Council must address the necessity of averting another tragedy, protecting a recurrence of a similar event. Mayor Caldwell, in his August 9th testimony, offered solutions to the concerns of financial hardships associated with the requirements of this Bill. The citizens of Honolulu are fortunate to have options which would ease and address any financial burdens which may be attributed to the sprinkler retrofitting. One such option is the Honolulu Rehabilitation Loan Program which, among other things can be used to "...correct hazardous conditions which exist in their homes." The Home Repair Loan allows owners assistance in complying with quality standards.

Another recurring theme the opposition asserts that certain building be "grandfathered" and exempt from the proposed requirements. I bring to this body's attention that grandfathering has been a factor that has gotten these buildings in this situation in the first place! Had Marco Polo not been grandfathered and exempt from retrofitting, there would have been a sprinkler system that would have contained this fire. Honolulu Fire Chief Neves has reiterated that the existence of a sprinkler system in this instance would have contained the fire to its origin and three lives would have been saved.

One opposer, (Pamela Ching-Misc. Com.4015) has suggested in her testimony that sprinklers in common areas would be sufficient. Samuel Dannaway, Vice President of Fire Protection at Coffman Engineers has stated that a basis tenet of sprinkler systems is that they should be retrofitted everywhere and that partial coverage would compromise the sprinkler system. (Mr. Dannaway authored the 2005 and 2013 reports on the feasibility of sprinkler systems to residential buildings currently exempt which was presented to this Council).

Raymond B. Bizal, Senior Regional Director of the National Fire Protection Association, an organization dedicated to eliminating death, injury, property and economic loss due to

fire, supports the adoption of Bill 69 as a life saving effort and commends this Council for considering this ordinance.

In closing, I implore that this distinguished body give serious contemplative consideration to pass Bill 69 in an effort to ensure that no other residents of this city and county have to experience another situation as what has occurred at Marco Polo and not another person perish as a result of a horrific fire. Citizens' lives depend on it.

Karen Winston Fox